

the condition of education 2001



INDICATOR 32

International Comparisons of Educational Attainment

The indicator and corresponding tables are taken directly from *The Condition of Education 2001*. Therefore, the page numbers may not be sequential.

Additional information about the survey data and supplementary notes can be found in the full report. For a copy of *The Condition of Education 2001*, visit the NCES web site (<http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2001072>) or contact ED PUBs at 1-877-4ED-PUBS.

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NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATION STATISTICS

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement

Completions

International Comparisons of Educational Attainment

Rates of secondary educational attainment among 25- to 34-year-olds in several G-7 countries have reached a level similar to that in the United States. U.S. higher educational attainment remains higher in both the younger and older populations than in these other countries.

The percentage of the population completing secondary and higher education in other industrialized countries can be used to compare the educational level of the U.S. population with that of its economic competitors. In addition, comparing the levels of educational attainment across age cohorts provides one way of measuring whether education levels in these other countries are increasing, decreasing, or staying the same relative to those in the United States.

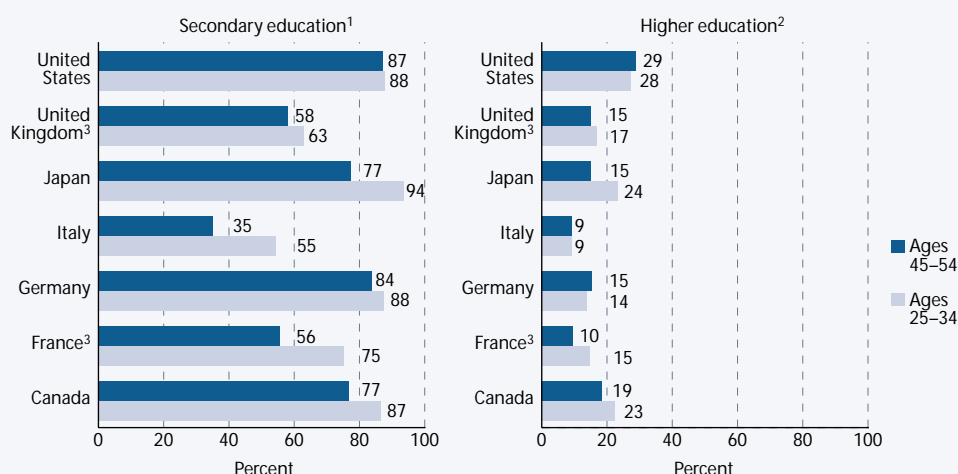
Among the G-7, large industrialized countries, at least 85 percent of adults ages 25–34 in the United States, Canada, Germany, and Japan had completed secondary education in 1998, and 75 percent had done so in France. Only in the United States and Germany did the 45- to 54-year-old cohort attain similarly high completion rates for secondary education. The similarity of the completion rates for 25- to 34-year-olds among all these countries in 1998—along with the lower levels of attainment among 45- to 54-year-olds in the other countries besides the United States and Germany—mean that the skill levels of the entire population ages 25–64 in all four countries could approach or, in Japan, even later ex-

ceed those in the United States (see supplemental table 32-1).

In that same year, the United States ranked first among the G-7 countries in higher educational attainment, with both the younger and older cohorts showing higher completion rates than their peers in the other countries. Japan had the largest difference in the attainment of the younger and older cohorts among all the countries, indicating that in the future the higher educational attainment of its population ages 25–64 may approach or exceed that of the United States.

Finally, the data also show that gaps in educational attainment between males and females have narrowed at both secondary and higher education levels in most G-7 countries. In fact, in the United States, Canada, France, and Italy, females ages 25–34 completed secondary and higher education at higher rates than did their male peers. In contrast, among the older cohorts, the higher education attainment rates were lower for females than males in all G-7 countries, and lower for females at the secondary level among the older cohorts in France and Italy (see supplemental table 32-1).

INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION ATTAINMENT: Percentage of the population in G-7 countries that had completed secondary and higher education, by age and country: 1998



¹Includes individuals who have completed at least upper secondary education.

²Includes individuals who have completed undergraduate programs at 4-year colleges and universities or advanced research programs.

³Not all secondary education programs met minimum criteria required by the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED).

SOURCE: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Centre for Educational Research and Innovation. *Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators 2000, 2000.*

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
Supplemental Notes 1, 9
Supplemental Table 32-1



International Comparisons of Educational Attainment

Table 32-1 Percentage of the population that had completed secondary and higher education, by age, sex, and country: 1998

G-7 countries	Secondary education ¹					Higher education ²				
	25–64	25–34	35–44	45–54	55–64	25–64	25–34	35–44	45–54	55–64
Canada										
Total	79.7	86.7	82.7	76.9	64.8	18.6	22.6	17.9	18.5	13.0
Male	78.5	85.7	81.4	77.2	61.8	19.7	21.8	18.8	21.0	15.7
Female	79.0	87.7	83.9	76.5	58.6	17.2	23.4	17.1	16.0	8.5
France ³										
Total	60.7	75.3	63.4	55.7	40.9	10.5	14.7	9.8	9.7	6.3
Male	63.8	74.8	65.9	60.8	47.0	11.6	14.1	10.9	11.6	8.9
Female	57.8	75.8	61.1	50.7	35.2	9.4	15.3	8.7	7.9	3.8
Germany										
Total	83.8	87.5	86.8	83.9	76.0	14.0	13.9	16.3	15.4	10.1
Male	88.6	89.1	89.8	89.3	86.0	17.0	14.8	18.8	19.7	14.8
Female	78.8	85.8	83.8	78.4	66.0	10.8	13.0	13.7	10.9	5.4
Italy										
Total	41.0	54.5	49.7	35.0	19.5	8.7	9.2	11.1	9.2	4.8
Male	42.5	51.7	50.4	39.7	23.4	9.2	8.1	11.5	10.5	6.6
Female	39.6	57.3	49.1	30.4	15.9	8.3	10.4	10.8	7.9	3.1
Japan										
Total	79.9	93.5	91.4	77.3	57.0	17.7	23.5	22.8	15.0	9.3
Male	80.0	92.2	89.7	77.0	60.0	27.0	33.1	34.3	24.3	16.2
Female	79.9	94.6	93.1	77.5	54.2	8.3	13.7	11.1	5.8	2.8
United Kingdom ³										
Total	60.2	63.0	61.7	58.0	53.0	15.4	17.0	16.6	15.0	10.7
Male	69.5	68.3	72.3	72.0	64.1	16.8	18.3	18.4	17.1	11.6
Female	49.8	55.1	51.1	46.6	38.8	13.9	15.7	14.7	12.9	9.0
United States										
Total	86.5	87.9	88.0	87.3	79.5	26.6	27.5	26.3	28.8	22.0
Male	85.8	86.8	87.0	86.6	80.2	27.8	26.2	26.9	31.8	26.4
Female	87.1	89.0	89.0	87.9	78.9	25.3	28.7	25.8	25.9	17.9

¹Includes individuals who have completed at least upper secondary education.

²Includes individuals who have completed undergraduate or advanced research programs.

³Not all secondary education programs met minimum criteria required by the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED).

SOURCE: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Centre for Educational Research and Innovation. *Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators 2000, 2000*.